



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION III

 841 Chestnut Building
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

PROPOSED REMEDIAL ACTION

PALMERTON ZINC SUPERFUND SITE - BLUE MOUNTAIN PROJECT

The U.S. EPA and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) are proposing to revegetate the defoliated portions of Blue Mountain by applying a sewage sludge/flyash mixture, along with lime and potash, to the barren slopes of the mountain. The sludge/flyash mixture would then be seeded with grass and tree seed. Tree seedlings may also be planted.

The basis for this proposed action is described in a Remedial Investigation /Feasibility Study (RI/FS) report prepared by EPA Region III titled "Palmerton Zinc Superfund Site - Blue Mountain Project", April 1987. This report summarizes the extent of the metal contamination on the mountain and the actual and potential environmental and public health threats caused by the contamination. The contamination caused by past emissions from the New Jersey Zinc Company smelter is so severe that most plant species can not grow on the mountain and as a result 1,500 to 2,000 acres are defoliated. Water running off the mountain is contaminated with metals (i.e. cadmium, lead and zinc). This contaminated water flows to the Aquashicola creek and contributes to the contamination of fish and other aquatic life in the creek.

To evaluate methods to remedy the problem EPA, with assistance from Penn State University and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, examined revegetation techniques. Using greenhouse studies and test plots on Blue Mountain, it has been demonstrated that application of a sludge/flyash mixture, along with lime and potash, can be used to revegetate the mountain. The EPA RI/FS report describes the proposed revegetation methods and procedures in more detail.

Current plans are to use sludge from the Borough of Palmerton and the cities of Allentown and Philadelphia. Sludge from a number of different sources is necessary because to revegetate 2,000 acres, approximately 220,000 tons of sludge will be needed.

The projected schedule is to begin the revegetation program by August of this year with a goal to complete the program in five years.

EPA will be soliciting public comment on this proposed remedy and the RI/FS report for 30 days. Comments should be submitted by June 21, 1987 to:

Ed Shoener (3HW24)
 US EPA - Superfund Branch
 841 Chestnut Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19107

Copies of the RI/FS report are available for review at:

Palmerton Borough Hall
 Borough Managers Office
 Palmerton, PA

Carbon County Planning Commission
 Carbon County Courthouse
 Jim Thorpe, PA

5/21/87

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